

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Purchasing and Contracting C-1
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RFI No. 802-16-34584

Digital Subscription Management Services

Class/Items: 956-35

Issue Date: March 14, 2016

RFI Closing (response deadline): April 6, 2016; 2:00 PM CT

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Request for Information Digital Subscription Management Services

SECTION I – OVERVIEW

1.1. INTRODUCTION:

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is seeking information from interested contractors who can provide Digital Subscription Management Services for our email marketing and related campaigns.

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely to obtain information to assist TPWD in its planning process and data collection purpose. It does not constitute a Request for Offer (RFO), a Request for Proposal (RFP) or other solicitation document, nor does it represent an intention to issue an RFO or an RFP in the future. This RFI does not commit TPWD to contract for any supply or service whatsoever, nor will any response to this RFI be considered for the evaluation of any response to a solicitation document. TPWD will not pay for any information or administrative cost incurred in response to this RFI.

Responses to this RFI are due by April 6, 2016; 2:00 PM CT. See Section 3 for further information. Responses should address the functional, performance and technical objectives outlined below.

1.2. BACKGROUND:

TPWD, Communications Division increases awareness of the importance of conserving the natural and cultural resources of Texas, increases participation in outdoor recreational activities and encourages safe, legal and ethical behavior among resource users. The division utilizes an array of media products and marketing efforts, driving traffic to the agency's revenue-producing products, including email marketing campaigns via an email services provider.

SECTION II – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

2.1 GENERAL:

TPWD is seeking information on email service providers that would satisfy general requirements including:

- ☐ Subscription Management
- ☐ Email Creation and Sending
- ☐ Content and Asset Management
- ☐ Testing Capabilities
- ☐ SMS Messaging
- ☐ List Management
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Analytics
- ☐ Social Media Tools

SECTION III – INFORMATION REQUESTED

TPWD is considering all current industry standards for email service providers to meet our specifications. TPWD welcomes the views, opinions, and feedback of the industry. In responding to this RFI, TPWD asks potentially interested parties to submit their perspectives on the following subjects.

Please number the submitted responses to match the numbers below.

Company Information:

- 3.1. Provide the following company information:
 - a. Company name and headquarters address
 - b. Contact name, title, telephone, email address
 - c. Company website URL
- 3.2. Provide a brief (no more than 2 pages) summary the services your company provides and your current and past experience providing email service provider services.

Email Service Provider Information:

Describe the following aspects of your services:

- 3.3. Without providing actual costs, describe your pricing structure. Do you offer monthly or annual contracts? Is pricing based on usage metrics such as number of subscribers or number of emails sent? If it's by a metric, provide the ranges. Is an enterprise solution with unlimited emails and subscribers available?
- 3.4. The user sign up process and how the user can manage that subscription after it's initially created. Do users have choices about how the messages are delivered (i.e. immediately or digested)? Besides email address, what additional information is or can be collected about users during the sign up process?
- 3.5. Features that make it possible to easily develop visually appealing and functional emails that render correctly on various email service providers and devices (desktop, mobile, table).
- 3.6. The deployment of triggered messages (e.g. automated messages triggered by website changes, the subscribers' enrollment, the subscribers' responses or lack of response, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.).
- 3.7. Email scheduling capabilities.
- 3.8. Ability to personalize or customize email messages for the individual subscriber based on information collected during sign up (i.e. first name, last name), location, social media activity, previous email open and click behavior or other information accessible by the system.

- 3.9. Auto responses deployed to subscribers who reply to emails. Can auto responses be customized for different subscribers?
- 3.10. Content and asset management system for things such as images and videos.
- 3.11. Any image editing capabilities within the email creation tab or in the image library. If applicable, describe the functions that are available.
- 3.12. Email testing capabilities.
- 3.13. Project management tools to enable tasks such as campaign planning and calendaring and email review and approval.
- 3.14. Mobile content and communications such as SMS text messaging, two-way text, interactive text, Push Notifications (especially to mobile apps), and QR codes.
- 3.15. Administrative controls for adding, deleting or modifying subscriptions.
- 3.16. How your service ensures the deliverability and security of emails sent and reduces the chance that the email is mistaken for spam.
- 3.17. List maintenance features that ensure deliverability and that allow for automatic suppression of emails that have opted out or have been black listed.
- 3.18. Administrative access including number of administrators allowed and various administrative roles and permissions settings available.
- 3.19. Analytic features to track subscriber behavior and evaluate the effectiveness of email campaigns, including the metrics used to track subscriber engagement on an individual level and/or contact level (e.g. opens, click-throughs, unsubscribe rates).
- 3.20. Analytic features to aggregate and compare subscriber engagement over time, filter and develop reports on specific variables and/or campaigns, and the ability to develop graphical reports and dashboards to track subscriber activity. For example, describe the ability for a user to filter and select more than one bulletin to include in an analytic report that aggregates open/click rates for multiple bulletins and visually illustrates metrics over a specific period of time, including year-over-year comparisons.
- 3.21. Report export formats available.
- 3.22. Method for integrating web and email analytics to measure subscriber behavior after opening an email.
- 3.23. Analytic features available to report on subscriber behavior after opening an email based on data integrated from outside sources such as Google Analytics, customer profile data integrated from API, etc.

- 3.24. Reporting on the type of devices, email service providers and/or browsers subscribers use to open and read content.
- 3.25. Reporting on demographics available in the user profile (i.e. user can filter by specific demographics, user interests, and other custom variables imported into user profile).
- 3.26. Tools that enable subscribers to share content on social media.
- 3.27. Tools for publishing emails to a web landing page and/or to social media.
- 3.28. The ability for someone to use social media logins to subscribe.
- 3.29. Capabilities to add email sign-up forms to websites, Facebook pages and/or other digital channels.
- 3.30. The customer support, training and educational resources available.
- 3.31. Technical support available and set up time needed to complete a transition and data integration from another email service provider.
- 3.32. Capabilities to connect to other databases through APIs or other applications.
- 3.33. Current or future support for mobile apps to manage or deploy campaigns and download reports.
- 3.34. Customer service and trouble-shooting availability:
 - a. Hours of operation and types of service available (such as web support, live chat, email or phone).
 - b. Is live 24/7 support available? If not, can it be added?
 - c. Is a single point of contact assigned for customer service issues, or is it handled by a team?
 - d. How much experience do your customer service representatives have? Are they trained to take priority issues to supervisors to resolve problems quickly?
- 3.35. Your technical-support team and trouble-shooting procedure:
 - a. How soon do you respond to critical needs or priority service requests?
 - b. How quickly are non-priority issues resolved?
- 3.36. Back-up redundancy:
 - a. How often do you back up?
 - b. How much time is required to restore services in the event of a disruption or a major catastrophe?
- 3.37. Maintenance and upgrade schedules:
 - a. What is your percentage of “up time?”
 - b. Do you have a regular upgrade cycle?

3.38. Account set up process:

- a. What are the things you need from a new client?
- b. How much time does a transition from another service provider usually take?

3.39. Training for new clients ;

- a. How is it offered (onsite, web, Youtube, etc.)?
- b. Do you have printed manuals?

Additional Information:

3.40. Have you ever done business with a Texas governmental entity?

3.41. Approximately how long would it take to get a new client's email service up and running? What are the key variables or obstacles affecting the schedule?

3.42. Are you willing to create new services or system capabilities upon request?

3.43. What capabilities or features does your service offer that make it better than similar services in the marketplace?

SECTION IV – CONFIDENTIALITY AND OPEN RECORDS ACT

- 4.1. All written correspondence, exhibits, photographs, reports, other printed material, tapes, electronic disks, and other graphic and visual aids submitted to TPWD in response to this RFI are, upon their receipt by TPWD, the property of the State of Texas, may not be returned to the submitting parties, and are subject to the Public Information Act, Chapter 522, Texas Government Code (the "Act"). Respondents should familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Act. In no event shall the State of Texas, TPWD, or any of their agents, representatives, consultants, directors, officers or employees be liable to a respondent for the disclosure of all or a portion of the information submitted in response to this RFI.
- 4.2. If TPWD receives a request for public disclosure of all or any portion of a response, TPWD will use reasonable efforts to notify the applicable respondent of the request and give such respondent an opportunity to assert, in writing and at its sole expense, a claimed exception under the Act or other applicable law within the time period specified in the notice issued by TPWD and allowed under the Act.
- 4.3. If a respondent has special concerns about information which it desires to make available to TPWD but which it believes constitutes a trade secret, propriety information, or other information exempted from disclosure, such respondent should specifically and conspicuously designate that information by placing "CONFIDENTIAL" in the center header of each such page affected. Blanket all-inclusive identifications by designation of whole pages or sections as containing proprietary information, trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information are discouraged and may be deemed invalid. Nothing contained in this provision shall

modify or amend requirements and obligations imposed on TPWD by the Act or to applicable law, and the provisions of the Act or other laws shall control in the event of a conflict between the procedures described above and the applicable law.

- 4.4. TPWD will submit a request for an opinion from the Office of the Attorney General prior to disclosing any document designated as “Confidential”. The respondent shall then have the opportunity to assert its basis for non-disclosure to the Office of the Attorney General; however, it is the sole responsibility of the respondent to monitor such proceedings and make timely filings. TPWD may, but is not obligated to make filings of its own concerning possible disclosure; however, TPWD is under no obligation to support the positions of respondent or any other party as a result of disclosing any such labeled materials, whether the disclosure is deemed required by law, by an order of court, or occurs through inadvertency, mistake or negligence on the part of TPWD or its officers, employees, contractors or consultants.
- 4.5. TPWD will not advise a submitting party as to the nature or content of specific documents entitled to protection from disclosure under the Act or to other Texas law as or as to the interpretation of such laws. Each respondent is advised to contact its own legal counsel concerning the effect of applicable laws to the submitting party’s own circumstances.
- 4.6. In the event of any proceeding or litigation concerning the disclosure of any material submitted by the submitting party, TPWD will be a stakeholder retaining the material until otherwise ordered by a court or such other authority having jurisdiction with respect there to, and the submitting party shall be responsible for otherwise prosecuting or defending any action concerning the materials at its sole expense and risk, provide however that TPWD reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to intervene or participate in the litigation in such manner as it deems necessary or desirable.

SECTION V – GENERAL INFORMATION

5.1 **RFI SCHEDULE:**

RFI Issue Date:	March 14, 2016
RFI Closing Date (response deadline):	April 6, 2016; 2:00 PM CT

5.2 **CONTACT:** Inquiries related to this solicitation and RFI Responses should be addressed to the following person:

Mary Hardin, Purchaser	Phone 512-389-4721
Purchasing & Contracting	Fax 512-389-4677
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	mary.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov
4200 Smith School Road	
Austin, Texas 78744	

5.3 **CLARIFICATIONS:** TPWD will allow written requests for clarification of this RFI. Questions may be faxed or e-mailed to the point-of-contact listed in Paragraph 5.2 above.

- 5.4. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS:** To provide TPWD with sufficient time to adequately prepare responses to vendor inquiries, all questions should be submitted by 2:00 PM CT on March 22, 2016.
- 5.5. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:** The target date for answering questions is within two business days after deadline for questions. Official answers will be posted as an addendum to this RFI on the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) at <http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us>. Respondent names will be removed from questions in the responses released. TPWD reserves the right to amend answers prior to the RFI submission deadline. It is the responsibility of interested parties to periodically check the ESBD for updates to this solicitation prior to submitting a response.
- 5.6. RFI RESPONSE SUBMISSION:** Electronic responses, in addition to one, original hard copy, are appreciated. If sending hard copy only, please present it in a fashion that will facilitate OCR and conversion to a MS Word file.
- 5.7.** At its option, TPWD may also elect to follow-up directly with respondents with more detailed questions or to clarify submissions.